

August 31, 2020

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The Scranton School Board of Directors held a Special Meeting for General Purposes on Monday, August 31, 2020 immediately following the scheduled work session via Zoom webinar.

President Gilmartin called the Special Meeting to order at 8:48pm with a Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call: By the Secretary.

Present: Directors Cruz, Dempsey, Fox, Hume, Malloy, McAndrew, Welby, Yanni and President Gilmartin.

Absent: All Present.

Superintendent presented an overview of decisions being made this evening and Mr. Pat Laffey gave an update of revenues.

President Gilmartin asked if there were any questions.

Director McAndrew asked if legally, we are able to give employees health insurance during the furlough process.

Solicitor Audi said it would be a problem on several levels. Mrs. McTiernan said that if the board approves the furloughs, administration is recommending employees have health insurance until September 11, 2020.

Director Cruz asked John Castrovinci that if the furlough motion is passed tonight, will employees receive official notice through a letter or a phone call and also asked that if employees are recalled what is their status; would they keep their original date of hire and do they keep their vacation time and their personal days.

Mr. Castronvinci said it is always best to give the human touch as much as possible but the timeline has been extremely short and administration took great care in this decision. Mr. Castrovinci added the pandemic has made it difficult to meet in person and the significant number of employees being considered makes it very difficult to make phone calls to each and every person; the letter is needed to officially document the process and to apprise employees of their rights should they be furloughed.

Mr. Castrovinci said employees would keep their seniority when they're recalled and would be recalled by seniority to qualified positions and they also keep their sick days and personal days; when they returned to work the days would be in their accounts.

There being no further questions, Ms. Gilmartin moved to public comment. Ms. Gilmartin announced there will be a 3 minute break between speakers 10 and 11 and again between speakers 21 and 22.

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Public Comment

Matt Loftus, teacher, spoke against the furloughs, the vital role that paraprofessional play, CARES money and HEREOS Act and thinks the decision is premature.

Jennifer Telesco – decided not to speak.

Christina Horne, teacher, spoke against the furloughs, does not think it's illegal to continue health care and asked the board to vote in a way that minimizes harm to students and staff during this difficult time.

Angie Krieger, teacher, spoke against the furloughs, concerns of administrators still receiving salary increases and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Director McAndrew asked Mrs. McTiernan to address the administration raises.

Mrs. McTiernan said that unless an individual has changed positions the administration has not received any raises since 2018.

Shauna Pevec, spoke against the furloughs, concerns of people losing their health insurance and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Laura Lantka, spoke against the furloughs, in support of the paraprofessionals, the importance of the services of paraprofessionals and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Director McAndrew asked Mr. Audi to explain why health benefits cannot be continued.

Mr. Audi responded that a public entity is not allowed to compensate an employee who is not working, which this district has already been under scrutiny for doing that, and if an employee is not working the board does not have the authority to pay them anyway in compensation or health benefits so it would be unlawful to do so.

Jennifer Zaleski, spoke against the furloughs, thanked the paraprofessionals at Isaac Tripp, and the need for paraprofessionals in a virtual world.

Vivian Williams, spoke against the furloughs, understands difficult decisions, urged the administration to think outside the box to use paraprofessionals in virtual learning, the need to engage and communicate with parents and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Director Hume asked Mrs. McTiernan for Mr. Castrovinci to speak about the number of nurses and to readdress the notion that she will be able to recall employees as needed and to assure that this is not termination, this is a furlough.

Mrs. McTiernan said yes, they will be recalling employees as needed.

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Mrs. McTiernan indicated that the LPN positions are in the maintenance contract, CSNs are in the teacher's contract; the maintenance contract includes a clause that we cannot go below 184 employees.

Director McAndrew, regarding the maintenance contract, asked if the employees that have been on worker's compensation are being counted towards that number.

Mrs. McTiernan and Mr. Castrovinci both said the employees that have been on worker's compensation are counted towards the 184.

President Gilmartin asked Mr. Audi if we are getting off topic here and treading on the territory of "on the question". Mr. Audi agreed adding we are in public comment but there may be a time when we can clarify some things on some comments being made; but we are in public comment and we don't engage in back and forth at this time.

Director Hume apologized; Ms. Gilmartin understood adding that they've all been guilty of that at some point but there are many speakers to get through this evening.

Charlie Newcomb, spoke against the furloughs, the board's lack of empathy, understands the district's financial situation and believes this is an opportunity for the district to drastically cut staff and does not believe employees will be called back. Mr. Newcomb also believes the continuation of health benefits is for 30 days, not 10 days.

Luann Henehan, spoke against the furloughs, adding that she learned about the furloughs from the Scranton Times, concerns of continuation of health benefits, and said all of this is a violation of the collective bargaining agreement.

At 9:44pm Ms. Gilmartin asked for a 3 minutes recess and the meeting reconvened at 9:47PM. All board members present.

Suzanne Furey, spoke against the furloughs and urged the board to find another way and vote against the furloughs.

Elizabeth Lucas, spoke against the furloughs and is concerned about health care benefits.

Vince Wojnar, spoke against the furloughs and fears increased special education lawsuits, feels this is a rush decision and noted there are no administrative furloughs included tonight.

Edward Walsh-not in attendance.

Holly Meade, spoke against the furloughs, urged to extend health benefits for the paraprofessionals until the end of September and voiced concern of the loss of services of paraprofessionals for special education students. Mrs. Meade also said administrators have received raises this year.

Frances Regan, spoke against the furloughs, the loss of Kindergarten classes, registration concerns and asked to reopen the second Kindergarten class at Bancroft.

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Roberta Jadick, spoke against the furloughs and the services of the paraprofessionals.

Marianne Davis, spoke against the furloughs and the services of the paraprofessionals.

Britney Walsh, spoke of her time as a student in the Scranton School District and the loss of her senior year due to the pandemic.

Erin Harris, spoke against the furloughs and the purpose of paraprofessionals.

Jennifer Leshuk-Beppler, spoke against the furloughs, the support of paraprofessionals and her need of health benefits and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

A recess now took place at 10:25PM and the meeting reconvened at 10:28pm. All board members present.

Ann Marie Potter, not available.

Glenda Spickerman, spoke of the need of paraprofessionals and against the furloughs.

Daniel Keeler, spoke against the furloughs and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Michele Cunningham, spoke against the furloughs and the services provided by paraprofessionals.

Margie Holmes, spoke against the furloughs, the loss of Kindergarten classes and registration concerns.

Matt Michaylo, spoke against the furloughs and the need of the services the paraprofessionals provide.

Pat Festa, spoke against the furloughs and the vital services of paraprofessionals.

Joseph Healey, spoke of past administrators, urged the board to find savings to support the district and spoke against the furloughs.

Rosemary Boland, thanked everyone who spoke on behalf of the paraprofessionals, spoke against the furloughs, grievance arbitrations and the unions will fight for their collective bargaining agreements.

Courtney Blaney, spoke against the furloughs and the needs of paraprofessionals and urged the board to vote against the furloughs.

Lawrence Baracaia, spoke against the furloughs and the services the paraprofessionals provide.

(End Public Comment)

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Director Welby made a motion to approve A-TSI Plans for the following:

Isaac Tripp – A-TSI – Title I

West Intermediate – A-TSI

West High – A-TSI

Scranton High – A-TSI

Director McAndrew seconded, motion passed unanimously on roll call.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Welby asked if there is any data from last year's plan to this year and what improvements did we see and were we able to test due to the spring situation, and if these plans made any impact on our testing scores.

Mr. Paul Dougherty said we don't have any data to support it, a lot of our schools were identified as A-TSI schools for certain groups and obviously things were cut short due to the pandemic so these plans are essentially the same plans that were presented to the board at around this same time last year and we're just moving ahead with the same plans.

Director Welby asked what are the assessments, how are we tracking and how often do we track it.

Mr. Dougherty said we are measured on PSSAs.

A motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 3, 2020 and August 10, 2020 was made by Director Yanni, seconded by Director Malloy and duly passed 9-0.

A motion is in order with regret to furlough effective close of business on September 11, 2020 the following positions: 140 Paraprofessionals, 6 Intervention Specialists, 2 level 2 Intervention Specialists, 4 Part-time Maintenance, 1 LPN (Prescott/Willard), 1 Clerk at South Intermediate, 1 Clerk at West Intermediate, 2 hall monitors (Northeast and South Intermediate) 2 General Custodians (West High and McNichols Plaza) and 64 crossing guards; and to authorize the superintendent to recall any furloughed employee as needed.

Director Hume made the motion, seconded by Director Cruz.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director McAndrew understands this is a very tough decision and if there is no work to be done we do have to look at furloughs, but he is struggling with some administration duties that aren't able to be done and they were given additional duties and his question is, there are multiple people assisting transportation, we have people overseeing the recovery plan which we have a recovery officer for that, he doesn't think these furloughs are fair and doesn't think it's across the board and it's always the same groups that are cut or furloughed and he thinks we have to start looking at every department. Mr. McAndrew was not happy how the employees were informed and he thinks the communication to everyone that is affected was unfair and he apologized for that but going forward we need to do better, we should do better. Mr. McAndrew announced he will be voting no.

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President Gilmartin thinks we have to clarify this communication piece and thinks there is a great deal of confusion because she doesn't personally know how they can notify people of a decision that has yet to be made, we're between a rock and a hard place and it is her understanding that Mr. Castrovinci communicated with union leadership once the board discussed this as a personnel matter in executive session and decided that we would schedule this meeting to have a public discussion on this matter. Ms. Gilmartin does not know of any way to order these things and is certainly open to suggestions.

Ms. Gilmartin asked Mr. Castrovinci if it is accurate that he communicated with union leadership on Friday, August 28th.

Mr. Castrovinci said he spoke with both Luann Henehan and Rosemary Boland on Friday.

Ms. Gilmartin hopes she is not speaking out of turn but when she spoke to the newspaper on another matter the reporter was already aware of all of this and that communication certainly did not come from the district. Ms. Gilmartin added that there is no good way to do this and they can discuss all of the proper procedures and protocols but when you are letting someone know that they are going to be furloughed from a job she doesn't think there is ever a perfect way to do it.

Director Hume thinks this is really hard for everybody and it is a decision she will make with enormous regret but it is a fact that we cannot continue to look at the cratering (?) in our finances and not take every possible step when there is no work to be done. Ms. Hume hears and appreciates all of the hard work that the paraprofessionals do but we've never operated in a virtual setting before. Ms. Hume understands the teachers not wanting to return to the classroom yet; the board listened to them and voted on a virtual learning. Ms. Hume added that the provision has been given to the superintendent that as need people will be called back but this is a new world and it is hard to see how the board cannot face the very difficult decision to do this and they have a duty to the taxpayers not to pay people when it is not possible for them to work. Ms. Hume prays that they will be called back into the classroom but she sees no alternative at this point and will be voting yes.

Director Dempsey asked, regarding the 140 paraprofessionals being furloughed, that we will be calling them back based on need and we obviously have obligations with IEPs but there is a process that has to occur.

Director Yanni thanked Ms. Gilmartin for clarifying how all of that communication happened with the newspaper and agreed this is very difficult but has some question what duties can paraprofessionals perform in virtual learning, this is a new world, she doesn't know if anyone can answer what the employees can or cannot do in a virtual world.

At this time Director Yanni made a motion to table this until we can get some answers for example - who is going to translate if we have paras doing that now, how are the IEPs going to be handled and answers to health insurance.

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Director McAndrew seconded.

The motion passed with five (5) affirmative and four (4) negative votes. Directors Hume, Malloy, Welby and Gilmartin voted in the negative.

ALSO

Director Cruz made a motion to approve F-2, Personnel Report, seconded by Director Yanni and passed unanimously on roll call.

A. Professional Resignations:

NAME	POSITION	LOCATION	EFFECTIVE DATE
Ashlei Kishel	Grade 2 Teacher	Sumner	8/28/2020
Christine Matis	Sp Ed Emotional Support	West Intermediate	9/3/2020
Sarah Sweeney	Sp Ed Autistic Support	Scranton High	TBD
Terrance Whelan	Principal	Electric City Academy	9/4/2020
Mariah Sinkevich	Sp Ed Emotional Support	Monticello	8/21/2020
Jennifer Walter	Grade 4 Teacher	Armstrong	8/28/2020
Holli Musgrove	Sp Ed Learning Support	Whittier	8/28/2020
Sarah Singleton	Sp Ed Autistic Support	West High	8/28/2020
Alyssa Edwards	Math Teacher	West High	8/26/2020
Bridget Kapmeyer	Kindergarten Teacher	Armstrong	8/21/2020
Katelyn Moore	School Psychologist	District-Wide	8/28/2020
Erika Pavlowski	Sp Ed Autistic Support	Electric City Academy	8/28/2020

B. Professional Appointments:

NAME	POSITION	LOCATION	EFFECTIVE DATE	REPLACED	SALARY
Cassandra Merrill	Spanish Teacher	West High	9/2/2020	E. Galkina	\$38,377
Corrin Devereaux	Sp Ed Learning Support	Northeast	9/2/2020	F. Spager	\$41,751
Rebecca Price	Grade 7-English	Northeast	9/2/2020	K. Scanlon	\$39,618
Alyssa Spigarelli	Sp Ed Emot Support	Monticello	9/2/2020	S. Dutko	\$39,618
Breeda Holmes	Grade 6-English	West Int.	9/2/2020	C. O'Hora	\$38,603
Dominic Mazza	ELL Teacher	Northeast	9/2/2020	P. Cucura	\$39,618
Mary Elchert	Sp Ed Learning Support	West High	9/2/2020	K. Wrobel	\$46,971
Kirsten Dolan	Science Teacher	Elec City	9/2/2020	S. Schmader	\$46,971
Allison Mackey	Sp Ed Autistic Support	Kennedy	9/2/2020	E. Malone	\$47,203
Renee Vigil	Math Teacher	West High	9/2/2020	A. Edwards	\$46,275
Leigh Anne Machowski	Grade 6 Science	West Int	9/2/2020	A. Musto	\$45,116
Erin Scanlon	Grade 5 Teacher	Armstrong	9/2/2020	D. Chmil	\$40,521
Alyssa Gambo	Grade 6 Sci/SS	South Int	9/2/2020	J. McGuire	\$39,618

C. Professional Leave of Absence:

Kimberly Sabol	Kindergarten	Kennedy	ROH Sabbatical 2020/2021 School Year
Pamela Krupski	Title I Reading	Morris	ROH Sabbatical 2020/2021 School Year

D. Professional Retirements:

Ann Marie Cerra	Music Teacher	Whittier	8/28/2020
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E. Non-Professional Resignation:

William Orr	Temp Maintenance Supervisor	8/28/2020
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F. Non-Professional Retirements:

Colleen Strong Maintenance Scranton High 11/27/2020

G. Recommendation For Permanent Substitute Teaching Assignment

Alycia Grottola Family/Cons Sci Northeast 9/2/2020 R. Petratis \$38,377

H. Coaching Resignation:

Jamie Maloney Equipment Mgr Scranton High 7/31/2020

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Cruz congratulated all the new hires and appointees and thanked all those leaving for their dedication and service to the district.

ALSO

Director Malloy made a motion to approve agreement with MYCIL to provide transitional life skills services to students of Scranton School District as outlined in the attached agreement commencing on August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021. Financial Impact: Annual ½ day services fee per student: \$14,000. Annual full day services fee schedule per student – available upon request.

Director Hume seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously on roll call.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Director Cruz, seconded by Director Malloy, all in favor, and the meeting adjourned at 11:25PM.

By: _____